

ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY

(01.920.375.01)

Tu-Th 2:50-4:10pm, Murray Hall 211 (CA)
Rutgers University, Spring 2013

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The economy—the interaction among individuals, groups, institutions, organisations, societies, humankind, and their natural and social environment in making their livelihood—is one of the most complex and intellectually exciting of all social phenomena. It has been a prime subject of sociological inquiry ever since the birth of sociology as a discipline, and it is certainly one of the most dynamic fields of sociology today. This course (1) takes a glance at the rich history of economic sociology to acquaint you with the most important perspectives it has produced, (2) discusses some fundamental, large-scale processes of change capitalism has undergone, and (3) examines a set of economic institutions as social phenomena. It employs a historical approach, takes a comparative perspective, and emphasizes the importance of large and macro- (i.e., very large) structures. Instead of focusing only on the narrow present of the wealthiest societies, the course draws on material from the last four centuries or so of the rich and the poor regions of the world, focusing on the variety of capitalisms, in the plural, as well as the past and present of state "socialist" alternatives to capitalism.

In putting together this course, I assumed that you have at least a basic understanding of the nature of, and the most fundamental concepts used in, the social sciences. In other words:

***THIS CLASS IS FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS.
IT IS ABSOLUTELY NOT DESIGNED TO BE YOUR FIRST COURSE
IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES!!!***

The course consists of two meetings—roughly, a lecture and a discussion—each week. (For the precise schedule of the lectures and discussions, including the required reading for each week's discussions session, see pages 3-4 of this handout.) The lectures build partly on the readings but **ALMOST NEVER REPEAT THEM**. You will not be able to do well unless you (1) come to class, (2) do the readings thoroughly and on time and, most important, (3) concentrate while doing both.

Grading is a judicious combination of scores obtained from my well considered perception of your work:

- *Attendance, quizzes and homework assignments (15%),*
- *lively, mature, concerned, and constructive participation in the discussions (10%),*
- *midterm (25%),*
- *final take-home exam (25%)*
- *book review paper (25%).*

Readings:



In the Lecture / Discussion Schedule below, pictograms like this:  mark the days for which you are supposed to have **read** something. NOTE that the distribution of the readings is uneven, so it makes sense to do the assigned readings ahead of time. For a bibliography of the readings—including alternative sources for pieces that have been published several times—consult pages 6-7 of this syllabus. The books have been ordered through the University Bookstore (Barnes & Noble). They are also on Reserve in Alexander Library, and the single papers are also available online: either on Electronic Reserves or on Sakai or elsewhere. For the former, find the Reserves for this course in the Rutgers Library catalog IRIS, and click on the appropriate link, from a campus computer. For Sakai, go to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>. For other items, follow the links provided in the bibliography below. In the interest of preserving your eyesight, I recommend that you print the online reserve materials instead of reading them off the screen. When you do print, make sure you use the double-sided option. Please note that doing reading is an essential component of your contribution to your education. For this reason, there will be frequent and un-announced quizzes about the readings.

Midterm and Final:

The midterm (to take place on March 7, ***no exceptions!***) is an in-class, closed-notes and closed-books exam. The end-of-semester exam is take-home (you will receive it in the last class), and it is non-cumulative (it only covers the second part of the semester). Their purpose is to see how well you have digested the weekly readings and lectures and to reward those of you who did best. The midterm consists of a set of questions requiring short answers (definitions or mini-essay-style explanations of a concept), and probably 1 question requiring a one-page answer; the take-home at the end of the semester will be two questions asking for short answers (approximately 1-page each). If you do the work (attend and follow the lectures, do the readings, and participate in the discussions, etc.) during the semester, you should find the exams easy and the time allotted for them plenty. I invite you to propose questions that you would like to see in the exams. If I find them smart/interesting enough, I will include them.

Term Paper:

Choose one of the volumes listed at the end of this syllabus (and ordered through Barnes & Noble for your convenience). Write a book review of the selected volume. Length: between five and eight pages (1250 to 2000 words). Hand in a word-processed, printed version. Indicate word count, along with author, title, course number and your name ☺ on the cover page.

A good book review contains the reader's well-organized and convincingly argued, original observations on a book. I do not want you to simply summarize the book's contents. The best idea is to read the book with a notebook at hand and to jot down your observations as you read. Then organize your ideas, sketch an outline, and write up your review. The more you revise your review, the better its quality (hence your grade). This requires that you give yourself time to do all this: begin selection and reading early! I do enjoy reading original, witty and well argued papers and, like most humans, disdain stuff that is boring, repetitive, or un-inspired.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Midterm: class on **March 7**
- hand in your choice of a book for review no later than **March 14** (last class before Spring Break)
- hand in your book review: **May 2** (last class before the end of semester)
- pick up take-home: in the same class on **May 2**
- hand in take-home: by **5 pm, May 3**, 132A Davison Hall or as a .pdf or .doc file sent as an email attachment to me via sakai or jborocz@rutgers.edu .

The Classroom Is a Workplace

The most important, and unique, aspect of this course is the interaction that takes place in the classroom. None of the lectures is available in a written form, and the discussions are by default unavailable in any other form, time, or place. Therefore, it is imperative for you to come to class regularly and, if you absolutely have to miss a class, to make up for the lost work immediately.

Experience has shown that late arrivals and early departures are extremely distracting. Please do your best to be in class on time, and remain there until the discussion is over. For the same reason, I must ban the use of cell phone and other electronic forms of distraction in the classroom. It is part of your responsibility to the course to turn off your electronic equipment before entering the class and to keep them that way until it is over.

Technology is an integral part of our life, at work as well as beyond. It is, however, extremely distracting and disrespectful for students to “tune out” in the middle of a class discussion or a lecture with the help of a hand-held device or a computer. It doesn’t matter whether you are chatting with a friend, doing your homework for your next class, filling in a job application or reading Shakespeare’s Hamlet online, it’s all distracting. You are expected to show adult behavior in the classroom and refrain from such destructiveness.

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.

Lecture / Discussion Schedule

	Tuesdays		Thursdays
1/22	intro: ourselves + class	1/24	Discussion of homework assignment + tools for economic sociology
1/29 	discussion: Legacies of Marx-Engels: “Manifesto. . .”	1/31	Discussion of “Manifesto. . .” continued
2/5	Legacies of classics after Marx: Weber, Durkheim, Simmel	2/7 	What’s Behind the Market? discussion: Polanyi: “The Economy as Instituted Process”
2/12	transformations within capitalism I: (Western Europe + North America): merchant - industrial (Taylorist / Fordist / post-Fordist) - finance capitalism	2/14 Film:	Modern Times part 1.
2/19 Film:	Modern Times part 2.	2/21	Discussion of film Transformations within capitalism II: (rest of the world): emergence and transformations of global capitalism; colonialism, dependency
2/26	transformations after capitalism I: socialism(s): mistakes, failures and crimes	2/28 	Transformations after capitalism II: successes Discussion: Böröcz: The “Rise of China . . .”
3/5	review before the midterm	3/7	MIDTERM
3/12	institutions: labor: value and price	3/14	Institutions: the state
SPRING BREAK			

3/26 	Institutions: informality <i>Discussion:</i> Böröcz: “Informality Rules” Portes & Sassen-Koob: “Making It Underground”	3/28	institutions: networks and hierarchies
4/2 	Institutions: inequalities <i>Discussion:</i> Böröcz: “Redistributing. . .”	4/4	Film-in-class: TBA
4/9 	Institutions: gender <i>discussion:</i> Crowley: “Women and the Domestic Sphere.”	4/11	institutions: “race”
4/16 	Institutions: money <i>discussion:</i> Zelizer: “Payments and Social Ties”	4/18 	Institutions: property <i>discussion:</i> Haslett: “Is Inheritance Justified?”
4/23	institutions: consumption and commercialisation	4/25	institutions: advertising <i>discussion: commercials</i>
4/30	review session before take-home	5/2	Hand in reviews Take-home finals distributed

5pm, May 3, 2013: DEADLINE FOR TURNING IN FINALS

List of Readings:

- Böröcz, József. 2000. "Informality Rules." *East European Politics and Societies*, 14,2(Spring): 348-80. ONLY segments "Informality as a Way of Doing Things" and "Informality as a Sector": pp. 351-355. ONLINE:
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=936259
- Böröcz, József. 2005. "Redistributing Global Inequality: A Thought Experiment." *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 26: 886-892.
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=936258 .
- Böröcz, József. 2009. "The 'Rise of China' and the Changing World Income Distribution." Pp. 86-108 in Hung, Ho-fung (ed.) *China and Transformation of Global Capitalism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. ONLINE:
<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~jborocz/china.pdf> .
- Crowley, Helen. 1995. "Women and the Domestic Sphere." Pp. 343-62 in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson (eds.) *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*. London: Polity Press. ONLINE: on Electronic Reserves.
- Haslett, D.W. 1986. "Is Inheritance Justified?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 15,2(Spring):122-55. ONLINE: on Electronic Reserves.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1848. Manifesto of the Communist Party. ONLY pp. 14-34. ONLINE: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>
- Polanyi, Karl. 1992(1957). "The Economy as Instituted Process." Pp. 31-49. in Swedberg, Richard and Mark Granovetter (eds.) *The Sociology of Economic Life*. Westview Press, Boulder. OR: in Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson (eds.) 1957. *Trade and Market in the Early Empires. Economies in History and Theory*. The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. ONLINE: on Electronic Reserves.
- Portes, Alejandro & Saskia Sassen-Koob. 1987. "Making It Underground: Comparative Material on the Informal Sector in Western Market Economies." *American Journal of Sociology*, 93,1(July):30-61. ONLINE: on Electronic Reserves.
- Zelizer, Viviana. 1996. "Payments and Social Ties." *Sociological Forum*, 11: 481-95. ONLINE: on Electronic Reserves.

List of Books for Book Review

(choose one, hand in your choice by the 3/14 class and turn in the review by 5/2)

Aneesh, A. 2006. *Virtual Migration. The Programming of Globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mathew, Biju. 2005. *Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City*. New York: The New Press.

Romero, Mary. 2002 (1992). *Maid in the U.S.A.* New York: Routledge.

Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb. 1972. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. New York: Vintage.

